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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BEIJING 003576

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TAGS: PARM PREL ETTC AORC CH IN

SUBJECT: CHINESE ACADEMIC CRITICAL OF NONPROLIFERATION
IMPACT OF U.S.-INDIA NUCLEAR DEAL

REF: BEIJING 3384

Classified By: Political Minister Counselor Aubrey Carlson. Reasons 1.
4 (b/d).

¶1. (C) Summary: The author of a September 1 People's Daily commentary critical of the agreement ultimately reached September 6 by the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) allowing India to procure civilian nuclear material and technology views the NSG decision as having weakened the nonproliferation regime and wonders whether future exceptions must now be allowed for Pakistan, North Korea and Israel. The fact that our source's views were published in the Party's official mouthpiece publication and that the Chinese delegation at the NSG plenary initially sided with those proposing obstacles to the India agreement suggests that elements in the Chinese Government share his views. End Summary.

Still Critical of U.S.-India Nuclear Deal

¶2. (C) Fan Jishe was the author of a September 1 People's Daily commentary critical of the U.S.-India civilian nuclear deal. On September 11, in the wake of the September 6 decision by the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) to grant an exemption to India allowing it to procure civilian nuclear material and technology, Fan told PolOff that he believes the exception for India weakened the nonproliferation regime and did not "set a good precedent." It would have been helpful, he suggested, to have included text in the NSG statement indicating India's support for international nonproliferation norms. Instead, he said, it appears that India won a "clear waiver from the NSG with no pre-conditions."

¶3. (C) Now that an NSG exception has been granted for India, Fan said, he and other opponents of the agreement need to "face the real world" and accept that a U.S.-India nuclear deal is going to be implemented. In Fan's view, a more pressing concern now is what comes next. He expressed concern that the NSG exception for India would lead to NSG exceptions for other countries such as North Korea, Pakistan or Israel.

A Nonproliferation Supporter

¶4. (C) Fan, Deputy Director of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences' Center for Arms Control and Nonproliferation Studies, said he was surprised that his September 1 commentary in the People's Daily received so much international media attention. He noted that he had previously published articles there criticizing the

U.S.-India nuclear deal for its impact on the nonproliferation regime and arguing that the United States has double standards on nonproliferation. (Note: A search of open source materials revealed numerous previous articles by Fan on the subject.)

Influence on Policy?

¶ 15. (C) Despite his views having appeared in the Party's official newspaper, Fan told PolOff, they did not represent the PRC Government's position. He told PolOff that he is simply one of the few nonproliferation experts in China. Fan acknowledged that he provides "technical" advice to Chinese policymakers on nonproliferation and export control issues, but PolOff was unable to determine which political leaders or bureaucrats Fan advises. During his exchange with PolOff, Fan repeated China's oft-stated view on the U.S.-India Civil Nuclear Cooperation Initiative. From the beginning, said Fan, China has made clear that it does not oppose the U.S.-India nuclear deal but supports the peaceful use of nuclear energy balanced with nonproliferation norms.

Comment: A Trial Balloon in the People's Daily?

¶ 16. (C) Fan's article in the comment section of the People's Daily appears to be an example of an idea under discussion in official circles and floated in public to gauge international reaction. Given that Fan's opinion piece was published in the Central Committee's flagship newspaper and that the Chinese delegation during the September 4-6 NSG Plenary in

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Vienna initially sided with those raising objections to the draft exception suggests that elements within the Beijing leadership agree with Fan's views. With China ultimately joining consensus in Vienna to support the exception, however, any Chinese objections apparently were outweighed by other considerations, such as the possible harm to China's relations with the United States and India that a stand-alone breaking of consensus would have caused.

BIO Note

¶ 17. (C) Fan has also been working for 9 years at the CASS Institute of American Studies, where he is a Research Fellow. He has a 1994 B.A from Liaocheng Normal University, a 1997 MA from Nanjing University and a 2004 Ph.D. from the Graduate School of CASS. He was a visiting scholar at Harvard's Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs and attended two seminars hosted by the Monterey Institute of International Studies Nonproliferation Center. His publications have appeared in Chinese, U.S. and UK journals. He speaks English and is open to meeting with U.S. delegations.

RANDT